

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PEPR, PN

SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES STORY ON PANAMA CANAL TREATIES

THERE FOLLOWS TEXT OF NEW YORK TIMES STORY OF APRIL 11
BY GRAHAM HOVEY ENTITLED QUOTE WARNING BY PANAMA TO CARTER
REPORTED UNQUOTE.

QUOTE: THE PANAMANIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON HAS WARNED
THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IN A WHITE HOUSE MEETING THAT
HIS GOVERNMENT'S PATIENCE WITH THE SENATE'S HANDLING OF THE
PANAMA CANAL TREATIES WAS RUNNING OUT, ACCORDING TO A TRANS-
SCRIPT OF THE MEETING CIRCULATING TODAY ON CAPITOL HILL.

QUOTE: THE TRANSCRIPT RECORDS AMBASSADOR GABRIEL LEWIS
GALINDO AS WARNING FRANK MOORE, PRESIDENT CARTER'S ASSISTANT
FOR LIAISON WITH CONGRESS, THAT SENATORS WERE 'NOT AWARE
OF THE PANAMANIAN REALITY' IN HANDLING SENSITIVE TREATY
ISSUES.

QUOTE: 'I THINK THAT AT THIS TIME IT IS NECESSARY THAT YOU
ACT MORE QUICKLY AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE REACTIONS IN
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PANAMA', MR. LEWIS SAID, ACCORDING TO THE TRANSCRIPT. 'WE
HAVE BEEN PATIENT UNTIL NOW, BUT EVERYTHING HAS ITS LIMITS'.

QUOTE: THE AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH MR. MOORE TOOK PLACE
AT THE WHITE HOUSE APRIL 5, ACCORDING TO THE TRANSCRIPT.
MR. MOORE, APPARENTLY CONCERNED THAT THE CIRCULATION OF
THE TRANSCRIPT WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE SENATE VOTE NEXT

WEEK ON THE BASIC PANAMA CANAL TREATY, WHICH WOULD TURN OVER THE WATERWAY TO PANAMA BY THE YEAR 2000, ISSUED A STATEMENT TONIGHT CHALLENGING THE ACCURACY OF THE NEW DOCUMENT IN SOME MAJOR RESPECTS.

QUOTE: DESPITE THE DISCLOSURE OF THE TRANSCRIPT AND OTHER INDICATIONS OF GROWING PANAMANIAN OPPOSITION TO BOTH THE BASIC PACT AND THE TREATY GUARANTEEING THE NEUTRALITY OF THE CANAL, WHICH THE SENATE HAS ALREADY APPROVED BUT WITH RESERVATIONS, THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WAS TRYING TO MAINTAIN OPTIMISM.

QUOTE: ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS INSISTED THAT THE ODDS STILL FAVORED SENATE APPROVAL OF THE BASIC TREATY NEXT WEEK WITHOUT DAMAGING RESERVATIONS AND A FINDING BY PANAMA, HOWEVER, RELUCTANT, THAT IT COULD ACCEPT THE SENATE RESERVATION TO THE NEUTRALITY PACT THAT WOULD EXPLICITLY AUTHORIZE THE UNITED STATES TO INTERVENE BY FORCE INDEFINITELY TO KEEP THE CANAL OPEN.

QUOTE: 'IT'S OUR EXPECTATION THAT SOMEHOW, SOME WAY, WE'RE GOING TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS SITUATION', SAID AN ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL INVOLVED WITH THE ISSUE. 'IT'S INCOMPREHENSIBLE THAT PEOPLE WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE THE FOLLY OF LETTING ALL THIS EFFORT OVER MANY YEARS GO DOWN THE DRAIN'.

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QUOTE: YET OFFICIALS CONCEDED THAT THEY WERE DEEPLY WORRIED ABOUT A RISING TIDE OF PUBLIC OPPOSITION IN PANAMA TO THE RESERVATION IN WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION RELUCTANTLY ACQUIESCED LAST MONTH, AND ALSO ABOUT THE REACTION OF WAVERING SENATORS TO THE PANAMANIAN OBJECTIONS. UNQUOTE

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